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THE GALLUP POLL ON RELIGION

In the United States . . . . Robert Hovda

In Great Britain . . . . . John M. Todd

The Nightmare of Mau Mau

by J. L. Benvenisti

Anthony Bailey Gerald Weales

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

"SHOULD MR. EISENHOWER RESIGN?"

PRESIDENT EISENHOWER'S rate of recovery seems almost miraculously good—a fact for which the nation and the free world can rejoice. This is not to say, obviously, that efforts to deal with the question of Presidential disability should be called off. We have to face the fact that the President may suffer another and more serious attack without warning, and we must know who can make vital decisions if Mr. Eisenhower is incapable either of making them himself or of resigning. Months ago, the President urged Congress to take action on this matter, about which the Constitution is silent; now his stroke, coming on top of a heart attack and a serious abdominal operation, makes adequate provision for such an emergency more necessary than ever.

Mr. Eisenhower could, of course, render the entire question of disability moot. He could resign now, while he is in full possession of his faculties, and thus automatically elevate Vice President Nixon to the Presidency. This course of action would have certain real advantages. It would eliminate complaints that Assistant to the President Sherman Adams is exercising power unconstitutionally. It would put an end, once and for all, to the power struggle said to be going on between Mr. Adams and Mr. Nixon and their respective partisans. It would place the reins of government in the hands of a vigorous and hardworking man, able to give his full time and energy to the killing demands of the Presidency, and it would do so in a crucial period in national and world history.

Under the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that some commentators and newspapers, here and abroad, have suggested that Mr. Eisenhower might well resign. These suggestions, it should be emphasized, are not coming from partisans of Richard Nixon. The men who urge this course are not anti-Eisenhower. They simply feel that the President's health has for many months kept him from doing all that needs to be done by the Chief Executive, and they fear that his latest attack will mean a highly dangerous delay on the host of vital questions posed by the Soviet scientific breakthrough.

GRANTING the strength of these arguments in favor of Mr. Eisenhower's resignation, we still do not believe that such a move is either necessary or advisable, unless the President's health takes a sharp turn for the worse. Despite some falling-off in personal prestige in recent years, the President's international stature remains very high. He is widely regarded abroad as a man who seeks peace, and he is a great unifying force for the nation and the entire free world. These assets should not be lightly dismissed.

Mr. Eisenhower stated many months ago that he would resign if he ever felt incapable of doing his job. Barring further crippling disability, we think that the decision should now be left to him and his doctors. The thing to do is to lighten still further the burdens he must carry—to delegate as much Presidential authority as is feasible, to eliminate details, and to reduce as much as possible the number of long-drawn-out meetings and conferences. Yet, necessary as this is, the answer does not lie in shifting even more responsibility to non-elected White House aides.

What, then, can we do? The choices open to us seem to be limited to three—resignation by the President, the possibility of an extended regency under Sherman Adams, or greatly increased powers for Mr. Nixon. Of these, we favor the third. The best course, we believe, would be to bring the Vice President into the White House now and give him

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a permanent and vastly increased share in the burdens of the Presidency.

Extending Mr. Nixon's authority would take some doing—there is no doubt of that. Mr. Eisenhower would have to spell out exactly what that authority would be, possibly placing Mr. Nixon in overall charge of defense and foreign policy questions, responsible directly to the President. Or perhaps Mr. Nixon could simply function more or less as the President's junior partner. In any case, Mr. Eisenhower would have to make it quite clear that the Vice President, rather than Sherman Adams, was in the future to be the Number Two man in the White House.

All this would not be easy, but that does not mean it would be impossible. There is no sense in trying to muddle through as though Mr. Eisenhower were in the best of health. If the President were to die or become completely incapacitated tomorrow, Mr. Nixon would be his successor. Either eventuality is tragically possible. Under the circumstances, giving Mr. Nixon a new official role now would take some of the weight off Mr. Eisenhower's shoulders. And giving the Vice President vastly increased powers would be infinitely better than leaving urgent national problems to be dealt with by men who have not been elected to make such decisions, or, worse yet, not to be dealt with at all.

NEW HOMES FOR REFUGEES

TWELVE YEARS AFTER World War II there are still some two hundred thousand refugees in Western Europe. To be sure, a number of these are comparatively recent arrivals—such as those from Hungary, Yugoslavia and East Germany. Others are the "hard core" cases, exiles and escapees who for years have been awaiting an opportunity to establish themselves in a new land, and many of these must be accounted as aged or infirm.

One-fourth of the refugees who remain in Western Europe are quartered in the camps operated and supported by the United Nations, and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees is determined to bring this program to an end by 1960. (The U.N. Assembly itself has refused to assess the general membership for the continued support of the Palestinian refugees in the Middle East, but has agreed to assist those undertaking the soliciting of voluntary contributions. During the coming year the great bulk of that burden will undoubtedly continue to be shouldered by Great Britain and the United States.)

It is at this juncture that an American citizens' group, after examining the situation for the International Rescue Committee, has come forward with a proposal that would liquidate the European refugee problem. Instead of continuing to pour out millions of dollars that are unproductive—for such items as upkeep of the camps, small subsidies for personal necessities, food parcels and the like—the sums expended should go toward helping the refugee to reestablish himself. If a refugee gets the chance to change his status from that of an idle recipient of alms to that of a self-supporting and self-respecting farmer or wage-earner, he and his family can start life anew. And it has been demonstrated repeatedly in this country, in Israel particularly, and in other lands that even handicapped refugees can become self-supporting. Also, under the program envisaged by this eminent citizens' group, each nation would harbor its share of those who are too aged or infirm to contribute to their own support.

It particularly behooves the United States, as the champion of human freedom, to take the initiative in bringing new hope to these exiled victims of totalitarian tyranny. By our willingness to welcome to our shores some seventy-five thousand of the refugees that are left (and on a non-quota basis) Americans can lead the way. It is indeed the moment for public sentiment backing the required changes in our immigration laws to be gathering force—before the new session of Congress. If at the same time we succeed in prevailing upon our NATO and other allies to arrange for the resettlement of the remainder, one of the great blights that has come down from World War II will have been obliterated. Such an achievement would add immeasurably to the moral prestige of the West.

NEXT WEEK

BEDE GRIFFITHS writes about the ideal of non-violence, in the Christmas Issue.

"It is not a question whether it is 'legitimate' to fight in a war, but whether the world has not reached a point where we may be called upon to renounce this very 'right.' At least we have surely reached the point when we must face this question seriously."

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PUBLICIZED FAILURE

THE FAILURE of the highly publicized Vanguard to send a United States satellite orbiting in space was, as could be expected, a definite blow to United States prestige and morale. Many countries quite naturally welcomed the opportunity to amuse themselves at the plight of the powerful United States. Even close allies and American commentators spoke of the failure with a flippancy that second thought may find uncalled for.

When the entire situation is assessed what most clearly emerges is the extent to which America lags, not only or even primarily in scientific achievement, but in psychological awareness and preparation. In what seems to become increasingly a space age our leaders have not had the vision to lead. When, over two years ago, the U.S. satellite program was underway, the Administration chose not to push for an early satellite because it was not a "defense or security instrument." Not until the quiet, unexpected announcement from Moscow that "the first artificial earth satellite was successfully launched in the U.S.S.R." did the Administration realize its tremendous propaganda value.

To counteract this, we publicized our preparations through every available medium even though initial failure was a clear possibility. When the failure occurred the inevitable letdown followed.

Now some defenders of the Administration would blame the blow to our prestige on those who argued against false security measures. This is contrary to sense and to the existing facts. In a letter to the N.Y. *Times* of December 28, Thomas K. Finletter discusses the kind of information that should be divulged. It has little to do with the over-publicizing of an experiment of doubtful outcome.

The Administration is justly criticized for failing to distinguish between what should be divulged and what protected, for lack of proper appreciation of the potentials of political propaganda. The value of Vanguard lies in the goad it should provide.

FALLIBLE JOURNALISTS

WHATEVER one thinks of the current "religious revival," it is distressingly apparent that for many people interest in religious matters far exceeds knowledge. Authentic religious interest, then, must make its way despite a widespread lack of religious knowledge—so much so that, regrettably, one comes to expect misunderstandings concerning the less obvious aspects of religious matters in even the best of secular papers.

It is, however, still surprising and discouraging when an established religious journal misrepresents the readily available teaching of the Church on a specific point. Yet this is what has happened concerning the recent encyclical of the Pope on mass communications. After the American hierarchy directed that a study be made of radio and television, the *Christian Century* commented that the hierarchy "cited as authority for this zeal a recent encyclical of Pope Pius XII dealing with mass communications. This understanding of the meaning of this supposedly infallible directive seems to differ from the understanding of Roman Catholic Archbishop Philip F. Pocock of Winnipeg." They then quote some cautions of Archbishop Pocock which "seem directly to refute the statement of the American hierarchy."

The apparent intention of these statements is to suggest that a directive supposed by Catholics to be infallible can lead to differing ideas and courses of action. The supposition here, however, is that of the *Century*. The infallibility of the Church has been the subject of prolonged discussion and careful definition. It does not extend to every statement of the Pope or of the hierarchy, however carefully Catholics are bound to consider these statements. And reference to a sound, elementary dictionary should clarify the status of an encyclical. *A Catholic Dictionary*, for instance, states that "encyclicals are not necessarily infallible documents, though the Pope could choose to speak *ex cathedra* by means of them if he wished to do so." If the Pope exercised this choice it would be quite clear and neither Catholics or non-Catholics would be forced to "suppose" about the Pope's intention. For our part, we hope that the encyclical will continue to produce thoughtful responses.

PLIGHT OF THE CITY

THERE IS a current feeling among municipal authorities that the American city is something of a stepchild. In recent years our urban centers have been abandoned by many of their former residents for life in the less encumbered suburbs. And the influence of rural Congressmen from various states appears to these authorities to have deprived our cities of the lion's share of Federal appropriations. Unquestionably, sums from Washington for urban slum clearance and low-rent housing projects have remained on the extremely modest side.

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The shift to the suburbs and the establishing of branch stores have hardly helped in the maintenance of city finances. Too many of our urban centers were born and spread out in the most haphazard fashion to begin with. The accumulated effects of lack of planning are showing up now in such matters as traffic congestion and the decay of residential neighborhoods.

Only here and there have reverse tendencies begun to attract public notice. At times it is an enterprising neighborhood association that takes the initiative; sometimes the city fathers themselves take things in hand by planning changes and insisting on worthy building codes. For any wholesale improvement in our cities, a combination of substantial local initiative and financial assistance from without would seem to be essential.

AN OBSCENE BOOK?

THIS YEAR—for the first time, surprisingly—the Supreme Court dealt with cases challenging the fundamental constitutionality of Federal and state anti-obscenity statutes. And the Court's decision, it will be remembered, was not of the "liberal" character of the other historic rulings of 1957. Upholding the constitutionality of the anti-obscenity statutes, the Court held that obscene material is not protected by the First Amendment.

The court's definition of obscenity ("material that deals with sex in a manner appealing to prurient interest") no doubt furnished a better understanding of the term than previous legal phrasing, and its declaration that the court test of obscenity depended on the judgment of "the average person" was hailed by many as the long-awaited answer to the problem. Other commentators, including the editors of this magazine, gave general approval to the anti-obscenity decision but felt some misgivings concerning the vagueness and practicability of the legal concepts in it.

That the problem remains with us is clear from the specifications of indictments recently issued by a New York grand jury against distributors of a number of magazines and books alleged to be obscene. Among the publications listed are a string of titles such as *Suppressed, On the QT, Uncensored* and *Whisper*. But on the very same list is John O'Hara's recent novel *Ten North Frederick*. Now we think Mr. O'Hara's fictional comments on American life to be undistinguished by any great understanding of either life or America, and we have winced more than once, in reading his books, at the sordidness and futility he sees in our society; but certainly John O'Hara is a serious— and gifted —writer, and it is a grievous mistake to treat his novel like a "girlie" magazine.

The two absolutes—of public decency safeguarded at any cost and freedom of speech at any cost—are, in our society, equally impossible to maintain. Somewhere in between the absolute ideas, the nature of the limitations on both must be worked out—slowly, painfully, above all cautiously. It may be impossible not to err on one side or the other, but we must try to do just that. Our legislative and judicial procedures must be subject to continuous examination and review, to rectify whatever weakness and confusion may have crept into them or their application. The Supreme Court decision earlier this year cleared the air to some extent, but obviously, as we see in the New York indictments we have cited, we are far from a final solution to the problem.

We do not think that because Mr. O'Hara's book was classed as obscene the New York indictments are therefore to be condemned, nor do we think that artistic freedom in America has thereby been irreparably injured. But we do believe that this instance points up our still unresolved difficulties in dealing with the problem of obscenity. We call for no black-or-white prescription in an inevitably cloudy issue; instead, we anticipate the only procedure which can bring success—a series of patient, trial-and-error compromises and adjustments.

PEEKS

SOME MONTHS AGO we remarked, sadly, on the wildly proliferating exposé magazines, television programs and books that promise—and deliver—the titillation of excursions into the most private areas of human life and personality. The appetite of our age for this kind of "intimate revelation" continues unabated, apparently, and has now brought forth—just in time for Christmas!—what we hope is the ultimate in this direction. This is a widely-advertised parlor game of "analysis," "based on the latest psychological testing techniques . . . gives participants hilarious, exciting, intimate and revealing 'peeks' into the private lives of friends and family . . . even themselves."

We insist that an ugliness like this is no true index to the culture of America, but we admit to being shaken, and we hope that people like Evelyn Waugh don't get wind of it.

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The Gallup Poll on Religion

Some months ago the Gallup poll conducted surveys on religious beliefs and practices in the United States and Britain. People were asked to state whether they believed in the divinity of Christ, in the existence of the Devil, and in life after death. They were also asked whether they thought the professing of Christianity required belief in the New Testament and regular attendance at church.

Aside from these questions, those interviewed were requested to state their opinion concerning the role of the Church in social and political matters. Should the Church attempt to influence judgment and opinion in these areas? And if it does make the attempt, does it have anything to offer to the solution of the problems of today?

On the basis of the results, which suggested that Americans attach more importance to religion than do Britons, an American and an Englishman comment on the surveys.

IN THE UNITED STATES

by ROBERT HOVDA

IS IT "secularism" or is it the Christian's failure to communicate significantly with contemporary society that is the greatest obstacle to the Church's mission in our country? Dr. Gallup's release of five articles on the subject "Are Americans more religious than Britons?" implies that secularism, like any other ideology, has a hard time growing in this soil. Whatever else they may prove (who is holier than who is after all a question beyond the competence of sociologists), this at least seems evident.

The series reports that American church attendance got off to a record start in 1957, with fifty-one per cent of our people reporting their attendance at synagogue or church the week of the survey. According to the survey, opinion is divided quite evenly on the question "Should the churches keep out of political matters—or should they express their views on day-to-day social and political questions?" with the edge favoring articulation. A substantial majority of both Catholics and Protestants believe that one can be a Christian "even if he doesn't believe in every word of the New Testament" and again "if he doesn't go to church." An overwhelmingly large majority of Americans believe in the divinity of Christ, and a fair majority in a life after death and in the Devil. Sixty-nine per cent believe that "religion as a whole is increasing its influence on American life" and eighty-one per cent that "religion can answer all or most of today's problems."

It is obvious that the questions as well as the answers arise from a religious climate which is not without its dangers. Catholics, who believe strongly in "going to church," may yet search the survey in vain for convincing evidence that God, rather than "religion" itself, is the object of all this activity. The Catholic vision of a universal religious community, based on God's Word, His revelation, meant to be the spiritual home of all men, embracing peoples of an almost infinite variety of thought as well as of complexion—that vision simply does not figure in the popular religious consciousness of our time.

Nor can one be satisfied that the fundamental conversion of religion—the moment (stretching out into the succession of such moments which is the religious life) when man confronts God—is truly at the root of it all. How much of this "back to God" business is a confession of unwillingness to grapple with the progress of our age (progress which should mean much to the Christian mind in terms of the forward-movement of creation) and a search for something else, something really other than God, "back there" when, we imagine, religion caused no pain and no frustration?

ISN'T IT significant that the cult of personal peace, whether the resolution be in favor of a fundamentalist Gospel assurance of individual salvation or a psychological reassurance that we can all be rich and happy, is the dominant note of the revival?

"Did you go to church?" is not a question that gets to the root of the matter. It is encouraging, yes, that so many of our people "go." It would be neither just nor charitable to impute evil or indifferent motives, to say they go for reputation's sake, or they go be-

Father Hovda, who has previously contributed to The Commonweal, is a pastor in North Dakota.

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cause their neighbors go. These motives may be cogent enough, but the fact is that they do "go." And going, they worship; they hear the Word.

But the question is not deep enough. The *New Yorker* years ago published a cartoon showing a tribal chieftain stepping into the middle of a circle of his morally underprivileged subjects, who were hungrily eyeing an unhappy-looking and securely bound explorer. The chief said simply and classically, "But, first, our national anthem." Like a fairly common type of patriotism, there is also a kind of domesticated religion which, because of the social status of its clergy and the financial soundness of its institutions, is welcome at any tribal gathering. This is the problem of popular religion—of Christianity, too, when it becomes popular. How do we transmit the Word of God purified from social dross, from the mores and customs of society? Especially since our task is to penetrate precisely these with the light and life of Christ?

We follow Dr. Gallup to ask more questions: "Do you believe the Church to be the creation of God or merely a human institution?" This needs elaboration: Do you belong to this Community, are you part of it, are you the Church? Do you believe it bears a Word that is more than the sum of human words or human wisdom? Do you receive this Word with faith, not as excuse for mental sloth or human unconcern, but as light and direction and stimulus for every human action? In the Church's one Sacrifice and in its common Holy Food do you reach out to God and to your brother? Do you gain a consciousness of the imperative of selfless love, a sense of mission, from this Table?

The second question, too, is inconclusive. To say the churches should express their views on social questions may mean the clergy should express their views. The level of moral and dogmatic doctrine is within the theologian's competence. The non-theologian (that is, most laymen), by his formation in Christ through Word and Sacrament, through his life in the Church, must bring that light of Christ to his own competence (which he gains, as any non-Catholic gains, by his excellence in his field), in economics or in politics, in art or natural sciences. Though bishop and priest have no right to evade the moral questions, they must always be aware that the Church, apart from defined doctrine, is as full of conflicts as there are questioning minds within it, that Revelation is not a series of blueprints.

Fearlessly to bring God's Word, summed up in charity, to bear upon the whole of human life, yet to refrain from equating the specific program with that Word—this is not an exercise in the art of dodging, but a tribute the believer must pay both to the awesome purity and transcendence of the Gospel and to the nature and scope of human reason.

That we have failed to communicate the notion of the Church is inescapable. It is clearly high on the American's list of desirables to be considered a Christian. But "going to church" and "believing every word in the New Testament" are activities which many find opposed to their tastes and inclinations, and some way must be found to release them from the Christian definition. So it was the conclusion of the majority of Catholics as well as Protestants in the survey that these two elite prejudices are fairly irrelevant to Christianity. One "can be a Christian" without them.

Because, apparently, one *must* "be a Christian." The Sacraments of initiation, the new life "that looks towards God," the altar and the Sacrificial Meal—what have these to do with "being a Christian" (that is, not-being an atheist, Communist, etc.)? And this negative conception of being a Christian has a certain justification, we must admit, in the theological ignorance of our people, in the liturgy's failure to communicate and to be a living sign, and in the respective caricatures of both Protestant and Catholic morality to which the most publicized activities of both groups still give ample support.

DESPITE ALL THIS, certain Christian dogmas still receive a vote of confidence. Jesus was recognized as the Son of God by ninety per cent of those polled. But the fact that in the same poll only seventy-four per cent expressed a belief in life after death somewhat reduces the value of this credal affirmation. And only sixty-one per cent conceded Satan's authenticity. In all of these there was little difference of opinion between Protestants and Catholics.

The catechism can dissect the faith and present the isolated doctrines. The Christian life, the existential commitment to Christ in the Church, must compose them, encompass them, integrate them—and not necessarily with specific advertence to each. The catechism can be published, and is, and will continue to be—sometimes it seems with remarkably little sensitiveness to the language and the needs of our time. But the Christian life, in which these doctrines become one (or in which they are one before the catechism gets hold of them and does what it must do), impinges upon the consciousness of men in other ways.

Finally, sixty-nine per cent of the Americans polled think that religion is increasing its influence on American life. And eighty-one per cent do not believe that it is old-fashioned, but that on the contrary it "can answer all or most of today's problems." This may reflect no more than a traditional American optimism.

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But I prefer to think that this, like other parts of the poll, is a sign of a certain healthy (also emotional) rejection of human autonomy. What we have then is certainly not "secularism," but rather an almost wistful desire to believe and to hold that the object of belief is relevant as well as true.

The Church can meet this challenge in a number of ways. It would be easy to capitalize on the emotionally charged atmosphere by claiming to have "all or most of the answers to the problems of today," to aid and abet the process of alienation from the world and its complexities, to appear the foe of progress and technology, to under-value the human intellect, science, scholarship, research, to perpetuate our divorce from living philosophy and art.

But the Church also can do now what in the long run it will inevitably. It can attempt to communicate itself, to make itself known as ark of God's Word and Holy Sacraments and as the universal community toward which creation groans and for which mankind longs . . . as community of salvation and community of sinners . . . as the living magisterium of revealed Truth with an authority that comes from God . . . as reverencer of human reason, encourager of human talents and disinterested lover of human inquiry and of those differences from which progress is born.

It can labor, in season and out, to make men realize what its altar and its Eucharistic celebration were always meant to be: living experience of the Word of God; thanksgiving to God for creation, Incarnation, Redemption; sacrifice (the making holy through incorporation in Christ's work) and blessing of every creature; communion that makes one body in Christ every man, woman and child of every nation, every people.

These are all truths of faith. But these are truths not clearly seen, not quickly heard, not easily known. If our age evidences a disposition for faith, it is implicitly begging Christ's Church for clarification of the intellectual content of faith and for the example of true love.

It would be unfair to condemn Dr. Gallup's poll for skimming the surface when we ourselves have had such slight success in communicating on a deeper level.

IN GREAT BRITAIN

by JOHN M. TODD

I WRITE HERE as an interested party. Not for me to give scientific sociological comment on the polls which have been held in this country and the results of which have been published in one of our big dailies, the *News Chronicle*. As a Christian layman interested in every effort to spread Christianity I can, however, comment from my own experience and try to look behind the figures.

Every six months since 1951 I have met for a week end with leading members of various Christian organizations, all of them concerned with evangelical work, or the work of the apostolate, as Catholics call it. We are Catholics, but we are concerned with all efforts to spread Christianity and we are concerned with doing it in a great number of different spheres of life, from British primary school children to the Managing Directors of big companies with trade spread across the world. We try to view the situation with which we have to deal, and, although we have as yet no scientific surveys of our problems, we have had sufficient reports and have had sufficient access to widespread opinion to form an idea of the problem. The conclusions which we have reached definitely bear out the figures of the poll.

Generally speaking there is a decline in Church attendance and a decline in formal religious adherence, with the one exception of the Catholic Church. On the other hand there is no decline in interest in religion as such; materialism is no more attractive to the man-in-the-street than is formal religion. There is even a growing awareness of religious problems, using religious in its deepest sense. There is a growing dissatisfaction with set religious assumptions passed on from parent to child, and a growing understanding that this generation at least must think out its problem from the bottom. There is little sign of any assumption that there is no problem, or that the meaning of life is not a fruitful subject for thought—the sort of attitude encouraged by "scientific humanism."

Looking at the problem historically it seems clear that society is experiencing the religious revolution which was bound to follow the extension of literacy to all men. Here one makes a generalization valid for the whole of mankind. What has taken European man two

Mr. Todd is the author of *Catholicism and the Ecumenical Movement* (Longmans) and the editor of *Springs of Morality* (Macmillan).

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and a half or three millenia is being achieved in Asia and Africa in a couple of generations; but the results are the same. Religion ceases to be something of which the symbols are visual and the experience direct; it becomes something which can be communicated by the abstract symbols of words, and the experience can be read about and may even come in the process of understanding the written word, in solitude, instead of in the process of religious worship in common with one's fellow men. Religion is thus also subject to attack on the literary level.

The failure of this particular attack as such is the more remarkable. I have already referred to the failure of "scientific humanism" to convince the ordinary man that life's problems are not basically religious problems. The conclusion reached by William Gregory in the last of his articles in the *News Chronicle* seems to me quite justified here: "If this inquiry has dealt out some heavy criticism to the Churches, then it is no more sparing of the secularists. In the view of the early rationalists, education would win the day for their philosophy. Things have not worked out that way. Indeed, those who have the advantage of higher education are more willing to accept the idea of a God than those who left school at an early age."

THE POPULARIZATION of superficial "rationalism" and of such materialist theories as the behaviorist theory in psychology has already reached its climax; such theories are dubbed inadequate as an explanation of life. People are moving on into agnosticism —they "don't know." Only a small minority in this country turn again to formal religion, because this seems to them like turning back to something childish which they have outgrown. It would mean a retreat from the challenge of their personal experience. The religion they were taught as children, the religion they have seen practiced by their parents does not, they consider, provide an adequate answer. As it was presented to them, it seemed to beg too many questions and to make too many assumptions. Its moral code seems to have no probable basis in reason; its beliefs seem too vague to demand serious attention. That, I am certain, is the experience of most agnostics; but this does not prove that the moral prescriptions are in fact unreasonable or that the beliefs are in fact vague. There may be a failure in communication.

When men and women are faced by serious personal problems we can say that the majority have to work things out for themselves alone. The result often enough involves a more or less strong belief in some sort of divine power, and the moral answer will often enough be an echo of traditional Christianity, but the Churches will have played little direct part in helping these human beings through their troubles. Only a small minority of such people in spiritual need are reached by those engaged in formal religious work. There is no reason, though, to doubt that those who are reached are helped. It seems sure that they are.

There seems, then, to be a good deal of truth in one part of the conclusion reached here by the *News Chronicle* writer. The Churches must adapt themselves. One thinks immediately of how John Wesley went out into the fields to preach to the laboring masses who could not afford the clothes usually considered necessary for church attendance. Today, again, great numbers of industrial workers will enter a church only to be baptized, married or buried. It is no longer because they have no clothes. It is something more intangible. It is not that they do not need to worship. It is that the building, the minister, the people who go to church, the whole ethos of the place is so alien that there is no point of contact. It is not that the moral precepts and the doctrines are examined and found wanting; rather they never reach the mass of the people during their adult life. If they do happen to wander into a church, they hear in the great majority of cases a language which means nothing to them and a ceremony whose symbolism does not carry.

Here we must part company with one of the conclusions of the British newspaper. Under the general conclusion that the Churches needed to adapt themselves was the detailed suggestion that they should "adopt a more liberal and less puritan attitude towards matters like divorce and Sunday entertainment." This is a muddle of two ideas, one concerned with compromise on basic sacramental doctrine laid down in the Gospel, the other concerned with an idea of the need for change on a matter which has always been subject to varied recipes, which is not amenable, in fact, to a hard and fast rule.

The suggestion of compromise over divorce runs directly counter to the facts of the poll itself, which showed the Catholic Church to be the only church which was increasing its membership. But of course the most striking of all the matters on which the Catholic Church differs from other Christian bodies is its uncompromising doctrine on marriage. The suggestion of "adaptation" here hardly seems logical. The reference, however, to Sunday entertainment is a different matter, and although we are again in the sphere of basic doctrine (in so far as it is a basic doctrine that the Christians should keep Sunday as a holy day) there are always bound to be different opinions about what may and may not be done on that day.

A typical instance of this latter question occurred on my own doorstep not long ago. The village community had lately subscribed money to lay out a field for

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football, leveling it out instead of being content with the undulating surface of the natural field and the somewhat haphazard sport it had provided. As football became more attractive there arose the question of whether it should be played on the one day on which most people are free, Sunday. A meeting was to be held to discuss this matter. A hall was hired for the meeting. The hall adjoined the Methodist Chapel and was controlled by the Methodist Minister. On hearing the proposed object of the meeting he withdrew his permission for use of the hall, saying that he could not allow even a discussion of such a subject. One sympathizes with the desire to keep Sunday as a holy day, but such a method of doing so seems unnecessary.

ONE CONCLUSION seems sure. Christians need to have a clearer, more scientific knowledge of the situation with which they are faced. Sociological surveys are the answer here. There need be no hesitation about the value of these; they have proved their worth in France where the religious revival can trace at least a part of its effectiveness to the demonstration of the situation which was provided by scientific surveys. In England a first survey is already producing results in the Catholic sphere. The Demographic Survey sponsored by the Newman Association has been providing precise data to the bishops; it is expected that publication of the findings of this important survey will follow shortly.

But surveys are only half the battle. They must be interpreted in the light of individual experience. Some of the basic context and the basic problems I have hinted at in the first paragraphs when I referred to the revolution brought about by universal literacy. Closely related to this is the problem of traditional religious forms, and the tie-up of all religious incidentals, dress, furnishing and modes of speech, with past ages. And underlying this again is the problem of the ideal of holiness—an ideal which for twenty centuries has been propounded more or less in a clerical mold because the great majority of literate people were clerics. This problem, which is at the root of the whole of the decline of religion, has been propounded in great detail by Père Yves Congar, O.P., in his book recently published in the United States (Newman Press) under the title *The Layman in the Church*. The ideals which are set before the Christian still tend to be those set before the clergy, ideals of celibacy and obedience; less stress is placed on social justice and the responsibilities attached to the ownership of property.

The illiterate laity were, in the past, told to be good in the domestic terms suitable to their relatively narrow sort of civilization; the ruling few were guided as closely as could be by the clerics with whom in fact they tended to wage a running battle of worldly versus spiritual weapons. Today it is a new world. Every Christian tradition is faced with the need to see whether it is still using modes which are simply anachronisms, or whether on the other hand it may not have thrown out the baby with the bathwater. The Church has to function in the twentieth century, but it has still to provide the principles on which the problems of the twentieth century must be solved.

This is the problem of clericalism only superficially. The Church, whether we speak as Catholics or not, is the whole body of Christians. The similarity between clergy and laity is more important than their differences, in that both clergy and laity have been baptized and have been born again to share in Christ's risen life. Christianity has then to be seen as an organization which involves all kinds of men; its membership must be seen to be potentially co-terminous with political society. It has also to be seen as something working effectively in this political society, providing a valid standard of conduct.

IT IS NECESSARY to make a distinction here, and the question asked about whether the Church should keep out of political matters was worded in such a way that it was impossible to get a clear answer. The distinction is one which I as a Catholic would put thus: the Church as a body must provide in great detail the standards of conduct to which the Christian duty of love obliges all Christians; where there are alternatives, it must indicate this, but it must not leave the whole sphere of politics aside as though it were something impure. On the other hand, the Church should not make official pronouncements on day-to-day affairs; these are almost invariably a matter of opinion to be judged by the individuals involved on the basis of the ethical principles previously enunciated. It would be unreasonable to deny to clergymen the right to express their opinions about such matters, but they do it as individuals, not in the name of the Church as such.

Christian laymen, however, must bear an obligation of an opposite sort; their religion commits them to carry charity into every action in every sphere of their lives, and to make a decision in every worldly problem. To stand aside is precisely to betray Christianity.

When Christians readily and naturally practice social justice and show that they believe that God created all things and "saw that they were good" and meant them to be enjoyed to their utmost by everyone, then all men will begin to wonder whether the Christian God may not indeed be that love after which they ever seek in the creatures which God made precisely as a symbol of His love.

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Its explosive potential
could rock Africa and the world

The Nightmare of Mau Mau

by J. L. BENVENISTI

IN MARCH of this year a very important thing happened in Kenya. Eight African members were returned to the legislative council by popular vote. Before then a certain number of Africans had already sat on this council, but they had been nominated by the government, and even now—in present-day Africa it could hardly be otherwise—the franchise which returns them is a restricted one, for the right to vote is dependent on the possession of at least one of a number of qualifications, such as property, education, service to the community and the like. This may be a limited beginning, but it is a real one, and the fact that it could be made is significant. It shows that conditions are once more returning to normal and that the long, hideous nightmare of Mau Mau is over at last.

To some extent, of course, the colony is still getting that nightmare out of its system—as for instance at the rehabilitation center for juvenile Mau Mau offenders at Wamumu, an institution that seems to be quite amazingly successful. There, young ex-gangsters (who, I am told, include actual killers) are now eagerly sought after by employers and have in the vast majority of cases done extremely well for themselves on discharge.

All this is welcome news. Yet the fact that Mau Mau is a thing of the past is not sufficient reason for putting it behind us and forgetting about it; actually there are cogent reasons for doing just the opposite. For Mau Mau was very far from being a mere irrational outburst of primitive savagery. It was, indeed, just about as "primitive" as the hydrogen bomb (and pretty nearly as dangerous). It was an almost incredibly ingenious artifact, the product of highly sophisticated minds and adapted with almost diabolical cunning to exploit certain very specific social and psychological conditions. Those conditions are likely to be present in Africa for a very considerable time, and those same minds which capitalized on them, or other minds equally sophisticated and by no means necessarily African, may one day seek to do so again.

Mr. Benvenisti, a regular contributor, is a British economist and writer.

When I say that Mau Mau was an artifact and insist (as I do insist) that so far from being a spontaneous uprising, its chief means of recruiting followers was by a highly ingenious combination of superstition and terror, I do not wish to imply that there was no genuine grievance associated with it. There was such a grievance in the land question. It is perfectly true that in a time of acute land shortage, much of the best land was, and is, held by Europeans, though it was, of course, honestly bought and paid for. Nevertheless the land problem derives not from the fact that this or any other land has been "stolen" from the natives, but from the enormous increase in the Kikuyu population, due almost entirely to the introduction of Western preventive medicine. If every white settler were expelled or killed tomorrow, it would contribute nothing to the solution of this difficulty, though the contrast between the relative affluence of the white settler and the poverty of the average Kikuyu may admittedly act as an irritant.

EVEN SO, however, nothing in the nature of Mau Mau would have resulted from this but for the presence and skillful exploitation of certain specific circumstances. The chief of these was that the tribal system was already in decay; indeed but for this Mau Mau could never have developed at all, for it not only entailed certain grave violations of tribal law but capitalized on the sense of rootlessness and spiritual insecurity which that decay engendered.

Also, strange as it may sound, Mau Mau could hardly have developed but for the spread of Christianity, which, on paper at any rate, had been very extensive, though in many cases alleged conversions had chiefly been prompted by the desire to acquire the white man's magic of reading and writing, of which the missionaries had long been the chief and for a time the only disseminators. To a very great extent the dynamic of Mau Mau derived from the psychology of the lapsed Christian. It used his embittered negations, his moral nihilism and his nostalgic hankering (despite those negations) for the emotional stimulus of the messianic idea. It is significant that perversions of the Christian liturgy played an important part both

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in the spread and in the working of the conspiracy. It is, thus, against a kind of pseudo-Christian background that Mau Mau should be seen, and actually the principal matrix within which this whole thing germinated was a genuine, though possibly extreme, Christian heresy.

The essence of this heresy was the belief that the Christian faith was not incompatible with ancient practices like polygamy and certain sexual initiation rites. This heresy, which centered in two institutions, the Kikuyu Orthodox Church and the Kikuyu Independent Pentecostal Church, was defended with much eloquence by quotations from Scripture long available in the Kikuyu tongue, and many adherents, however misguided, were firm believers in Christ.

Since, however, these dissident churches must for obvious reasons be exclusively African, it was almost inevitable that the odium inseparable from religious controversy should become associated with skin color and that their congregations, and even their clergy, should have fallen easy victims to anti-white agitation. Thus hatred of the European came in the course of time increasingly to eclipse any remains of true religious faith. It was, therefore, not too difficult for members of these churches to slip over to the full Mau Mau cult, so much so that their ordained clergy sometimes officiated, in full Christian vestments, at the obscene Mau Mau oath ceremonies, some of which were actually a kind of caricature of the Christian confirmation service.

ANOTHER important religious strand in this affair was provided by Christian hymns and hymn tunes, to which, of course, special Kikuyu words were set. This served a double purpose. Few Europeans know the Kikuyu tongue—if they know an African language, it is usually Swahili—and as a result it was possible to hold under the noses of Europeans large Mau Mau propaganda sessions. These had the appearance of religious meetings, though in reality the words behind the tunes of "Onward Christian Soldiers" or "Abide with Me" would have surprised the listeners, had they understood them. What is of more importance, however, is that the kind of fervor that these tunes had often inspired in the past could without great difficulty be transferred to an entirely different object —particularly to the adoration of the messiah and chief organizer of the movement, Jomo Kenyatta.

Large numbers of Mau Mau hymn books were actually printed and are still in existence. L.S.B. Leakey, the archaeologist and anthropologist, and by far the best informed writer on this subject, gives examples of quite a number of them. Here is a typical excerpt:

"God mades his covenant shine until it is brighter than the sun, so that neither hill nor darkness can prevent him coming to fulfil it, for God is known as the Conqueror.

"He told Kenyatta in a vision 'You shall multiply as the stars of heaven, nations shall be blessed because of you.' And Kenyatta believed him and God swore to it by his mighty power.

"Kenyatta will find happiness before God, for he is the foundation stone of the Kingdom. He has patiently suffered pain in his heart, he is moreover the Judge of the Kikuyu." And so on.

The chief function of these hymns was the building up of an ecstatic personality cult which as I have just shown gained added force by evoking memories of the Christian liturgy. They served to gain recruits for the Mau Mau organization, though once the convert had been trapped, the peculiar psychic condition which changing circumstance has occasioned in so many Africans was worked on by very different means.

The cardinal principle of the whole Mau Mau mechanism is the oath, or rather the taking of a succession of oaths, the oath ceremony being surrounded by a great deal of ritual mumbo jumbo. Now the oath plays a very important part in the life of the Kikuyu, as it does in that of most African tribes. As in medieval judicial practice, a verdict can be made to depend on an oath, even if uncorroborated by other evidence, and the taking of it is surrounded by the greatest ritual solemnity. It is firmly believed that perjury will render both the perjurer and his family liable to unfailing supernatural punishment.

But though it is obvious that to a Kikuyu an oath would thus have tremendous compulsive power, the Mau Mau oath differed from tribal practice in two important respects. In the first place it was taken in secret at dead of night, and in the second it was very frequently taken under the threat of death, a threat which in the event of refusal was immediately carried out in a particularly horrible manner. Under such compulsion people swore to comply absolutely with all orders, even if it meant the murder of their own parents or their own children, and above all to keep all matters relating to Mau Mau utterly secret.

IT WOULD of course be clear enough to the genuine Christian that an oath administered in such cir-

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cumstances had no moral binding power, though he might keep it for fear of subsequent reprisals. Strangely enough, exactly the same effect was produced on the unconverted tribesman who had remained faithful to the custom of his tribe, for that same custom had emphasized two points, first the essentially public nature of an oath, and secondly that it was an act of very deliberate and solemn choice. It was these two strangely contrasting types of men, the unconverted tribesman and the sincere Christian, who, when they had the physical courage (which they often did), went straight to the police after such forcible administration of the oath.

Unfortunately there were all too many men who fell into neither of these categories, who had broken with the tribal life and were, despite their nominal affiliations, unilluminated by the Christian faith. Cut off as such men were from any formative ethical or religious force, there still burned in their minds the dim marsh light of superstition. On such men as these the ritual of the oath, particularly if it was horrible and terrifying, could still produce its effects, and it is in the accurate calculation that, despite the violation of tribal custom, it would do so, that the shrewdness of the Mau Mau leaders finds its expression.

This was far from being the only way in which these leaders exploited superstition. There was, as I have said, a succession of oaths that had to be taken, each more revolting than the last. So unspeakable was their character and the character of the practices involved that the 1954 Parliamentary delegation to Kenya would not allow an account to be printed in its report, copies of the suppressed portion being confined to the libraries of the two Houses of Parliament.

In all this there was also great subtlety, for the practices associated with these ceremonies involved vices with which primitive peoples are often unacquainted, and for which in consequence no specific cleansing rite existed. The oath-takers thus felt themselves enmeshed in an inescapable bond of evil and performed their masters' bidding like helpless automatons. So strong was this sense of doom that when in the rehabilitation camps such men were induced formally to renounce their oaths, the renunciation was often followed by a kind of psychopathic collapse that lasted for days.

All this surely makes it worthwhile to consider the leading personality of the movement, Mr. Jomo Kenyatta, now undergoing the relatively mild inconveniences of a prison sentence for sedition. Oddly enough, comparatively little seems to be known about him, save that he was missionary trained, that he studied at the London School of Economics, traveled extensively in Europe and spent about eighteen months in Russia. Where he got the money for these improving experiences nobody seems able to say.

While in England, he became the author of a book, a pretty innocuous work on Kikuyu customs, to which a preface was written by Professor Malinowski, Professor of Anthropology at the University of London. The general presentation of this work is, however, slightly peculiar. It has for frontispiece a photograph of the author in native dress reflectively fingering the point of a large African spear. It has the following dedication: "To Moigoi and Wamboi and all the dispossessed youth of Africa: for perpetuation of communion with ancestral spirits through the fight for African Freedom, and in the firm faith that the dead, the living and the unborn will unite to rebuild the destroyed shrines."

We cannot, it is true, be sure that certain rather odd passages in the above do not express Mr. Kenyatta's genuine religious beliefs, but it is hard to dispel altogether the suspicion that he is putting on an act. One could, of course, argue that Kenyatta is a sincere patriot whose only fault is a rather extreme broadmindedness in the choice of means (since these include almost every item in the catalogue of human depravity). Few people are likely to take that view, however, and it is certainly not that of the present writer. In any case, it rather misses the point, for it is the hideously effective means that are the really important thing and they could be made to serve—and possibly did serve—other purposes than those of Mr. Kenyatta.

WE HAVE seen that Kenyatta spent a considerable period of time behind the Iron Curtain. What he did there we can only guess. One thing, however, is certain. It is that this whole Mau Mau affair is being put under the microscope in that part of the world and that the causes both of its failure and of its not inconsiderable measure of transient success are being meticulously scrutinized.

It is true that the Kikuyu are largely a forest people and that their habit of living in isolated huts both weakens tribal authority and makes it easier for an organization like Mau Mau to establish its grip, but the peculiar psychological condition which Mau Mau sought to exploit is today common to all Africa; a technique that really tapped its latent explosive potential could prove to be a weapon that would rock the world.

It is admittedly not enough merely to recognize the danger. You have also to guard against it, and the main principle of defense is not difficult to grasp. It is to give the African a sense of belonging, a sense of direction and purpose both as to this world and the next—a process in which religion, education and material advancement all play their mutually harmonizing parts. That may not be easy, but few worthwhile things are.

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THE SCREEN

A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE

ALTHOUGH it is a war film, "The Bridge on the River Kwai" is no ordinary war movie. It has no elaborate battle scenes, for instance. But the fine script that Pierre Boulle wrote from his own book has a great deal to say about the psychology of fighters and the battles that go on within a man. And, with the exception of just a few small sequences, "The Bridge on the River Kwai" is visually a practically perfect movie. Given an excellent production by Sam Spiegel, the film was superbly photographed in Ceylon by Jack Hildyard, who knows how to use Cinema-Scope and Technicolor; and it has a first-rate cast directed with imagination by David Lean, who knows how to use actors to establish character and also to tell a story.

The characters and story in "The Bridge" are both entertaining and thought-provoking, and they hold us from beginning to end of this long movie. The story starts in 1943, in a prison camp along the railroad the Japanese are building from Bangkok to Rangoon, and it begins with a revealing conflict. The Japanese commander of the camp (Sessue Hayakawa) insists that the British officers do manual labor with the other British prisoners assigned to build a bridge across the River Kwai. The British colonel, played by Alec Guinness in a magnificent performance as a strict martinet who has served for many years in India, insists with equal vigor that officers cannot be forced into manual labor. He quotes the Geneva Convention, the Articles of War, the code, the rules. Furthermore, he is shocked to find an American officer slaving as a gravedigger. But the American (William Holden) is no officer at all, just a smart opportunist posing as a commander and hoping thereby to keep himself alive in this sun-and-rain-drenched camp run by the ruthless enemy.

As punishment, Guinness and his officers are thrown into cruel sweatboxes by Hayakawa, who expresses his contempt for the Britisher's rules: "This is war, not a cricket game." But as the days and nights of punishment go on, neither the British doctor (James Donald) nor the Japanese commander can make the stubborn colonel relent. Finally the Japanese officer, realizing the bridge is not going along well and that the Japanese will lose face if the construction is not done by May 12th, when their army starts using the railroad, frees Guinness and his staff and sets them to supervising the project. Then it is that we see the full character of this British colonel, for whom this is all a matter of principle. He restores discipline among his men; he replans the bridge and starts building a new one in a better location, and when the doctor questions their building such a good bridge, Guinness replies that he wants people to remember in years to come what an extraordinary bridge this is and who the men were who built it.

Surprisingly enough, this grim and desperately serious picture also has its sense of humor in the scenes with Guinness and his staff showing up the Japanese during the bridge building and in those displaying Holden, who went through dreadful hardships in escaping from the camp, now gamboling on the beach in Ceylon. But Holden's gamboling is cut short. A British Intelligence officer (Jack Hawkins) persuades him to lead a commando raid back to the Kwai to blow up the bridge. The second half of the film, with Holden and a native guide leading Hawkins and a young Canadian (Geoffrey Horne) and several beautiful Siamese women, is as torturous as the first part. The trek through the jungle is complete with dangers from undergrowth, bats, leeches, enemy snipers and even worse woes when Hawkins is wounded and has to be carried. This gives Holden an opportunity to tell off the heroic Britisher who insists on being left behind: "There's a stench about you and your dying like a gentleman. The important thing is to *live* by the rules."

But the raiding party reaches the bridge and the suspense climbs to almost unbearable heights after Holden and Horne set the dynamite on the night before the Japanese train is to cross the handsome structure for the first time. David Lean has directed the episodes leading up the climax so skillfully and defined his characters so well that we sit spellbound to see what will happen: to the Japanese officer, who was outsmarted by the prisoner he held in contempt, to the proud British officer who suddenly discovers the wires and dynamite charges threatening this monument he built for the *enemy*, to the courageous American whose interest is in saving his skin *and* winning the war; to the British Intelligence officer who's determined to

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SONG FOR ADVENT

Drop down dew, cloud-burdened Heaven,
Let the sky be opened, rain
The Just; for bread that holds no leaven
Cannot rise, nor prayers; nor grain
Be fertilized without the Just.
Your people grind between their teeth
The fruit of famine: sterile dust,
Tears, sorrow, and the funeral wreath.
Let fall the vivifying, sweet,
Chaste rain, and let it pierce the earth:
Rain down the Just; the buried wheat
Awaits new life, awaits His birth.

JOHN L'HEUREUX, S.J.

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blow up the bridge at any cost; to the young Canadian who wants to prove himself. Few films manage to have such an exciting finale and yet emphasize the futility of war at the same time. One is exhausted by the final succession of events, and after the holocaust what one remembers most vividly about the memorable "Bridge on the River Kwai" is the British doctor's final exclamation of "Madness! Madness!"

FOR A COMPLETE change of pace, an item from England, "The Bolshoi Ballet," is bound to have its admirers. Produced and directed by Paul Czinner, this film in Eastman Color presents the famous Russian ballet company as it appeared on the stage at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Among the short opening numbers are the lively Dance of the Tartars from "The Fountain of Bakhchsarai," the Spanish Dance from "Swan Lake" and several other brisk items. The gyrations of the male dancers in the wild Walpurgisnacht from "Faust" furnished a couple of unintended laughs to the audience I was in, but the dancing is magnificent; and Ulanova's "Dying Swan" is really elegant. The high point of the program is the two-act "Giselle" in which Galina Ulanova again excels. I'm not sure that ballet done like this in a theater is particularly cinematic. The grimacing in the close-ups detracts considerably from the magic, and the static cameras have a certain monotonous effect. But for superb dancing, this film is tops—a must for anyone who is interested in ballet.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE STAGE

IN DREAMS BEGIN RESPONSIBILITIES

MR. MEADE ROBERTS' play has enjoyed, for some time, a certain murmurous repute on the fringe of theatrical gossip, and it is pleasing to have it finally available for experience. "A Palm Tree in a Rose Garden" is not, one must confess, a work of any notable irruption: its fluency of wit and realistic comment is circumscribed always within that theme of middle-class pathos and decay which has become a commonplace of theater. Yet if the domestic poetry of his play, however mournful, is a little familiar, even exhausted, Mr. Roberts has nonetheless found for it a new anchor in reality. He is not content to document private themes of loss and inadequacy; rather he would display them against the backdrop of a society which fosters such responses: here the fantasy world of Hollywood, fouled with the dust of illusion. "A Palm Tree in a Rose Garden" does not distill out of this experience that sense of metaphysical horror which issues from Nathanael West's "The Day of the Locusts"; it does not command, even, the sourly ironic style and blast of alien studies such as "Sunset Boulevard" and "A Star is Born": altogether there is a reduction in scale. Still, at his best, Mr. Roberts deftly interweaves his observation with a wry commentary on the cost of dreams, their wild, necessary intoxication, and the bleak resilience which grows out of their dissolution.

Mr. Warren Enters is a director who excels in this variety of miniature detailing: there is always a delicate precision in his stylistic response, a subtle modulation of surprise in his best effects. He has sought to establish for Mr. Roberts' play a climate of languor and stultified will, of the individual fantasy spinning itself out in complacent, melancholy solitude. A décor of satiric humor—full of barbaric California zest—sustains him in this, and he has drawn from his players apt illustrations of the naturalistic mode in acting. Miss Vicki Cummings contributes her gusto and blowsy good will, slightly droning, vaguely obtuse: there is a solid, nasal actuality behind this image of Miss Cummings which I find always convincing. Miss Barbara Baxley brings an arresting voice and baffled charm to the part of a waif, and there is a grace note of dotty portraiture in Miss Carol Couche's performance. If the idea behind the manner in which these roles are attacked seems, occasionally, a shade insistent, it is nonetheless founded in a perception of American manners which is authentic and just.

"A Palm Tree in a Rose Garden" inaugurates The Cricket Theater, a downtown playhouse most engaging in its color and controlled informality. (*At the Cricket Theater, Second Avenue at 10th Street.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

COMMUNICATIONS

"ATLAS SHRUGGED"

New York, N. Y.

TO THE EDITORS: Miss Patricia Donegan makes several grave errors in her review of Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* [Nov. 8] which require correction. In the first place, the statement that heroine Dagney Taggart "can live comfortably with two ex-lovers while enjoying a third in Atlantis" is a flagrant error from beginning to end. For (1) Miss Taggart does not "live with" her two ex-lovers at all after she meets John Galt in Atlantis. Her three lovers are seriatim, and not simultaneous, and numbers one and two are many years apart. (2) no love affair takes place between Dagny and Galt while in Atlantis.

Secondly, the word and the concept of "compassion"

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do appear in the book, and play an important role. There is a great deal of compassion: for heroic individuals tortured by looters and others who make them feel guilty for their very virtues; for loyal men (such as the "Wet Nurse") who died at the hands of the looters. The difference between Miss Rand's concept and the usual Christian morality is that there is compassion for a man's *fight against* suffering, or against unjustly imposed suffering, rather than pity for suffering *per se*. And whereas Miss Donegan is perfectly correct that "humility" has "no place in the author's scheme of things," charity does. But once again, it is charity *for the sake of virtues,* and neither meaningless charity nor for the subsidization of vice.

To say that "the destruction of the weak to the advantage of the strong is applauded" is a vicious misrepresentation; on the contrary, Miss Rand is attacking the destruction of the strong to the supposed advantage, but eventual destruction of, the weak; the society she advocates is one where *no one* destroys another human being for anyone else's sake. Indeed, Miss Donegan contradicts her own statement when she quotes the hero John Galt's motto: "I will never live for the sake of another man, nor ask another to live for the sake of mine." Is this the strong preying on the weak?

Finally, Miss Donegan's thesis that the book proceeds from the premise of hate is the worst contradiction of all: since the beginning of Galt's motto is: "I swear by my life and my love of it." Since the central theme of *Atlas Shrugged* is love of man's life, the book's central premise cannot be hatred of mankind, as Miss Donegan implies. How are we to resolve this seeming contradiction? If there is hate in the book, and its central theme is love of life, then the hate must be for those values and principles that destroy life and promote death. Any joy supposedly taken in destruction comes from the destruction of the life-destroyers, who get their comeuppance because their victims have finally cast off their unjust guilt, and refuse to grant their torturers moral sanction and cooperation.

MURRAY N. ROTHBARD.

REPLY

New York, N. Y.

TO THE EDITORS: Mr. Rothbard takes exception to the statement that Dagny Taggert "can live comfortably with two ex-lovers while enjoying a third in Atlantis." He adds that the three lovers are seriatim and not simultaneous. I had not intended to imply anything else. Atlantis is a small, specialized society whose members live in close proximity. I used the term "ex-lovers," by the way, in order to be specific. My premise, therefore, still remains that Miss Rand's heroic characters are, to say the least, one dimensional and unreal when they can support such a situation with equanimity and none of the usual human frictions in a quadrangle in which so much explosive ardor has been expelled at all corners. Mr. Rothbard is right to say that the affair between Galt and Dagny is not consummated in Atlantis, but judging from the heroine's performance, one needs no special insight to see the handwriting on the wall.

Secondly, he says that the word and concept of "compassion" do appear in the book, and that Miss Rand's concept differs from the usual Christian morality since it is compassion for "man's fight against suffering." The word may be easier to find than the traditional concept which according to Webster means "suffering with another," not as he seems to imply, applause for one of the battling agents. I refer also to Webster for a definition of charity.

When he says that Galt's motto does not imply the destruction of the weak to the advantage of the strong, he is, in effect, saying that all men are equally endowed, and that no one needs anything from anyone else. However, under the usual human conditions, a society in which each individual lives completely for himself means, quite simply, that only the strong survive. It seems to me that this is obvious. Furthermore, he says that Galt's "I swear by my life and my love of it" makes the central theme love of man's life. If this is so, then the looters also, as a part of mankind, are entitled to love their own lives in their own way. However, Galt's motto is, at best, only an individual expression: *"my* life and *my* love of it," (my emphasis) thereby precluding anybody else's life. This kind of private ownership of life and love is a closed circle. It negates the meaning of love itself. Love is creative and requires an object. Therefore, the love of one individual for himself to the exclusion of all others can only mean the opposite of love—or hate.

PATRICIA DONEGAN.

CHILDREN'S BOOK

New York, N. Y.

TO THE EDITORS: There is one volume which reached me too late for mention of it to be included in the recent Children's Book Number. Because it is of special interest, however, I should like to call it to the attention of the readers of The Commonweal. It is: *The Book of God: Adventures from the Old Testament,* by April Oursler Armstrong (adapted from *The Greatest Book Ever Written,* by Fulton Oursler), illustrated by Jules Gotlieb and published by Garden City Books at $4.95. These adventures are done with unusual skill, both in making the old stories live and in conveying their spiritual message with directness, simplicity and reverence. The book has an *Imprimatur,* and it is for children of all ages.

CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP.

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THE MORAL TRAP

I HEARD a physicist ask, with anguish, "How do you get people to understand what another war will mean?" We say another war will mean near-total devastation, but who can grasp total devastation? It is as remote to most of us as the catechism's abstract definition of hell.

The scientist has a better grasp. He understands, as the same physicist put it, how absurdly easy it is now to kill people. Laymen tend always to think of the next war as a repetition of the last but the knowledge of mass destruction advances by leaps and bounds. The ultimate horror of World War II, for instance, was the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. For a long time we referred to it as The Bomb but is it no longer *the* bomb; the Hiroshima bomb must now be regarded as comparatively humane.

The scientists have a lively appreciation of such horror. Perhaps that is why they, even more than the moralists, are so obsessed with the evils another war will bring. Einstein said he was not sure what weapons would be used in the next war but he knew that the one after that would be fought with sticks and stones.

President Eisenhower once said that there is no alternative to peace—it is either peace or nothing, literally nothing. Another general, Douglas MacArthur, said that war no longer made sense. Repeating his belief that the purpose of carrying on war is to achieve victory, the General admitted that victory was no longer a possibility. Both sides would end up "losers." After all, if I kill you and you kill me, who won the fight?

People have fought wars for many reasons. Some have fought for sheer plunder. That was perverse but it made sense. Some have fought for an ideal of freedom, but is was a freedom they expected to enjoy when the war was won. Americans have fought for home and flag—symbols of the things we believed were threatened and that we wanted to preserve. During the Second World War the ad-men told us we were fighting for apple pie, "One Man's Family," and the right to boo the Brooklyn Dodgers. These were corny enough goals, but there was some sense to them. They stood for more substantial things.

What can the ad-men tell us we are fighting for the next time? I am afraid that unless we fight an old-fashioned pre-atomic war—an unlikely possibility—they will have to turn to the philosophers for inspiration. For we will be fighting for naked abstractions—Truth, Goodness and Beauty. Nothing else will survive.

I think of Patrick Henry: "Give me liberty or give me death." It was a splendid piece of revolutionary rhetoric. But it is no longer rhetoric; it is now an example of political realism. For many unhappy millions in the world today who are not free, revolt means almost certain death.

There are individual brave men who made the Patrick Henry choice: they chose death over slavery. The men I speak of were heroes and martyrs and are worthy of all honor. They died so others might live. But now, no one lives. They gambled with the terrible alternatives and they lost. But can a whole nation make such a choice? Can a people decide that it is better to die than to live as slaves? The ancient moralists said that revolt was justified only when you had a reasonable certainty of its success. The Hungarians last year thought they had that certainty. They learned better. Most of them now are neither free nor dead. There is another old saying, older than Patrick Henry's: "While there is life there is hope." Like other enslaved people, the Hungarians finally chose to live by that saying rather than to die by the dreadful alternative that Patrick Henry gave the first Americans.

Now this is the way things are. There are millions in the world who are not free. We who are free know that; we have even learned to accept the idea. We have learned to live with the knowledge that we turned deaf ears to the cries for help from the enslaved. As the free Budapest radio went off the air the last words it broadcast were such a cry for assistance. We did not answer it. We felt we could not, without bringing on even more terrible evils than those that already exist. With some shame and vast regret then we had to admit to ourselves that we could not take such a risk. Maybe the Hungarians understood. We hope they did.

This is the way things are with us, the only people who so far have used atomic bombs. We are no longer free to act according to our old ideas of nobility. We can no longer serve our own ideals. We are trapped. And all the while evil prospers.

The great lesson of World War II, we thought, was that never again could aggression take place with impunity. The free nations would quarantine the aggressor and make conquest impossible. That is what we thought the lesson of World War II was. The real lesson is that such quick retaliation is now impossible. Nuclear weapons have made it impossible. We have to sit back and do nothing and close our ears to cries for help coming from the vanquished.

Some people believe that the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were profoundly immoral and say that there is blood on our hands. We ushered in the Atomic Age with those bombs and now because of nuclear weapons we are trapped. Did we set our own trap?

JOHN COGLEY.

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Literature as a Reflection of Man's Place in the Universe

THE COURT AND THE CASTLE. By Rebecca West. Yale. $3.75.

By ANTHONY BAILEY

THE COURT and the Castle, Miss Rebecca West's Dwight Harrington Terry Lectures at Yale University, turns out to be a brilliant and most searching book. It is not one which is easily summarized. The "recurrent theme" she takes and pursues through a line of great writers—the relationship between man and the state and man and God—is at once so general and so recurrent as to be hardly a theme at all. At any rate, it is difficult to think of at least one work by a notable writer which does not in some way concern itself with these matters.

But to suppose therefore that Miss West's book is too woolly to be worth reading would be quite wrong—although, in fact, it has only little cumulative effect, it does have, in its parts, a great deal of original interest. For one thing, it is a type of well-written cultural criticism which is not often met with nowadays, in which literature is studied not just as literature, but as an intense reflection of the writer's time and place in the universe. Miss West realizes that there is no such thing as pure literature. On the heights, it partakes of theology, philosophy, politics, and science; and, scanning the heights, the critic needs the power of prejudice to strengthen as well as narrow the view.

If her theme is vague, her bias is less so. To put it simply, it is a bias which insists on the recognition of original sin. Miss West first deals with Shakespeare, and, to her, Shakespeare's work is a testimony "against the heresy which had been revived by the Renaissance and was steadily to gain adherents till it triumphed in the Nineteenth Century: against Pelagianism. It was an array of evidence against the theory that man is free equally to choose between good and evil, and that, should he choose good, his own natural ability will enable him to reach moral perfection, and that our race could be changed and made innocent without search for a higher authority and submission to it. . . . (Shakespeare) describes a world which is hollow, and its hollowness is the negative impression of God."

Hamlet is a prime example of the graceless man, and Miss West sees in the play *Hamlet* Shakespeare's contention that, as the court of Elsinore is corrupt, inevitably society is corrupt. "There is a flaw running horizontally through humanity wherever it is gathered together in space." Generations of readers have refused to see this in the play, and have been blind to the fact that, in the play, the flaw runs into the past, in time as well. Hamlet's father, doing penance in purgatory for his sins and who now as a ghost asks for revenge, was touched by the same stain. What excites Shakespeare in this most pessimistic of all great works of art, writes Miss West, is the impossibility of conceiving any action which could justly be called virtuous. This is at the heart of the character of Hamlet himself.

It is a point, as she acknowledges, which Turgenev and Salvador de Madariaga have dealt with in the past. Turgenev was perhaps the first to reject the notion, which had been fostered by Goethe and many others, that Hamlet was irresolute. For Turgenev, rather, he is the perfect instance of a man fully preoccupied with his own personality, and "he ponders its strategical situation, not its duties." He is, in fact, the Renaissance man—egoism and skepticism personified. His frailties and self-contempt are a driving force. Miss West is perhaps a little over-anxious to dismiss the image of Hamlet which has slowly overgrown the play, but her picture of him as a complete opportunist is not short of the mark. He acts when he wants to act: not only is he not irresolute but he commits four murders, and kills once in self-defense; he kills only when it is in his own interest to do so.

Does this make a Calvinist of William Shakespeare? Probably there was never a great writer who so carefully omitted all serious reference to religion from his work. While it may be true that he viewed society and the court as hopelessly corrupt, where kings of necessity do evil, where they are inevitably overthrown by usurpers, where usurpation nevertheless is a hideous crime, there is yet a self-enhancing majesty (less of will than of being) that is present in his summation of man. "What a piece of work is man!" Although man runs to evil and to dust, he can live marvelously for a while, and that man who sees all this, as Shakespeare did in his time, is of course a fatalist.

Fielding, however, holds more cheerful views, and Miss West follows him and his "simpler notions" down through Emily Bronte, Jane Austen, Dickens, Thackeray, and Trollope. Some of her pages here are excellent, though they sometimes throw on the authors a different light than she perhaps intended. The novel is a middle-class instrument, after all, and that class, full of aspirations, has ever looked on the bright side of things. Yet one detects already what Ortega y Gasset called the Rising of the Historic Level. When we get to Trollope, the king had gone out of the court "and there was not even a usurper in his place, or rather there were so many usurpers that the eye could not take them in." With Proust, and finally with Kafka, the problem has again become intense. At Elsinore vengeance was possible, but what vengeance was possible to a Dreyfusard "unless he was willing to kill himself and all other Frenchmen of electoral age?" What is *wrong* when we are all murderers?

So much nonsense has been written about Kafka that it is refreshing to read Miss West on him. Unlike Proust, he saw the over-complex modern state from the *inside;* the

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state wherein man is enslaved by impotence rather than oppression. Kafka was a civil servant; he conformed as well as dissented; *The Trial* and *The Castle* are "on one level about bureaucracy, as Hamlet is on one level about the affairs of the royal family of Elsinore, though on a deeper level they are, like Hamlet, about the soul of man and his prospects of salvation and damnation."

God, as Miss West says, is the very context of Kafka's two coherent books. But what a God it is!—indifferent, unjust, almost hateful, whose grace is only a desert to which K. sacrifices his humanity. To me, it is more important still that K.'s hope—and hope is the subject of *The Castle*—is never blessed with any confirmation; only his anxiety goes well-supported. Miss West is not the first to compare Kafka and Proust. They share a similar yearning for a lost paradise. The melancholy that pervades their work is that of Genesis and every myth of the Fall. But it remains doubtful whether a graph can be drawn which measures in Miss West's terms the relations between man and the state and man and God, although it is a corollary of her book and doubtless a correct one that one attitude affects the other. In art, one does not necessarily symbolize the other. Again, it stretches a point to say as Miss West does that Shakespeare describes men without grace in order that we can understand what grace must be. Samuel Johnson found it easier than an Elizabethan or modern writer to say "Sir, we *know* the will is free, and there's an end on't." But no one would say that the Doctor was confident so that we might learn what anxiety was; that he believed in free-will in order to show us the meaning of predestination.

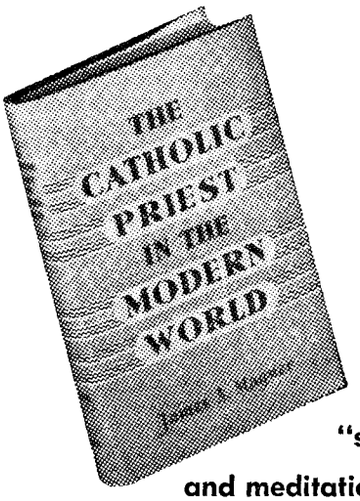
Yet the greater part of lasting Western literature since the Renaissance concerns itself with a universe that is generally 'bad,' rather than 'good'; with man without God, rather than man who possesses God. Is it that the writer who lives at a distance from the Elizabethan court, the protocol of the Guermantes, and the Austrian bureaucracy, has far more chance of believing in the innate freedom and goodness of man? Or is the great artist, requiring form in an apparently formless world, drawn to the bloody but fatalistic legend, the fatuous but regular manners of a class, and the cruel but organized habits of bureaucracy? Is he looking for order rather than for grace?

Perspectives

THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF EDUCATION. Edited by Edmund Fuller. Yale University Press. $4.

By PHILIP SCHARPER

THIS book grew out of a seminar on the Christian idea of education held at Kent School several years ago, and contains the eight papers presented there by such figures as Alan Paton, Rev. William Pollard, Episcopal priest and exe-



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cutive director of Oak Ridge, Jacques Maritain, Father John Courtney Murray, Reinhold Niebuhr and Father Georges Florovsky. To these the editor has added excerpts from the group discussions which followed the presentation of most of the major papers.

It could hardly be expected that such a meeting would or could come up with a series of conclusions, since many of the eight principal speakers could hardly accept each other's premises. The value of the book lies less in what it can possibly say about *the* Christian idea of education than in the many illuminating things which are said from the partial perspectives of different Christian denominations, or perhaps better, Christian attitudes.

Granted that no common agreement could have been reached about the nature and scope of Christian education, however, a greater centrality might have been achieved if some of the discussants had kept in mind the nature of religion. Religion is expressed in a culture, and may both reflect and shape a culture, but it is not a culture. Similarly, religion rests on dogma but does not rest *at* dogma. Religion is a relationship, and religious education necessarily moves out from and returns to that central fact.

Hence much of the discussion which centers on faith and culture and the task of Christian education as the transmission of Western culture seems, while certainly vital and usually enlightening, to be ultimately somewhat lateral to the subject under discussion, and makes brighter by contrast the paper by Massey H. Shepherd, Jr. on the role of liturgy in Christian education or Alan Paton's non-technical but moving paper on faith, morality and community.

Again, one is struck by the fact that so many of the discussants address themselves to the topic without even a nod in passing to the contributions made by such diverse people as Christopher Dawson, Cardinal Newman or St. Augustine. Each is mentioned effectively only once, although each has provided treatments of Christian education calculated to sharpen anyone else's ideas on the subject.

Lastly, one cannot but demur at Professor Harbison's answer to the question: can Christian education be a liberal education? To answer the question in the affirmative one need not, as he does, insist upon the necessity of a "liberal" Christianity; one need only review the pertinent history to realize that Christianity has lost its influence upon education when it has become liberal (i.e., minimally dogmatic) and been replaced in the classroom by disciplines which claim the power to say "Aye, aye" and "Nay, nay" in tones of authority.

Apart from reservations such as these, the reader can hardly fail to be grateful for this book. The major participants are educators, not educationalists, and their concern was with the concept rather than the content of Christian education. As a result, their observations are large, their attitudes generous and their language refreshingly free from the jargon which makes so many writings on education disturbingly reminiscent of a Robert Benchley report.

It is interesting to note that several important themes are illuminated repeatedly by the different speakers. There is the theme of assimilation, touched on by almost every discussant and developed with particular force by Father Murray, who sees the ideal of Christian education as "a universal knowledge, founded on a broad basis of fact, integrated by a philosophic view, this view itself being then vitally related to the organic body of Christian truth."

There is also the repeated, but implicit attention paid to the fact that the Christian idea of education rests on the Christian idea of man, that view which makes of man so complex a reality that no simple theories of education can be validly constructed for him. He is under the dominion of Caesar and God, and must be educated as a responsible citizen of both kingdoms. He has a living to make and a soul to save. He has a divine commission to serve as priest and king over material creation when it is so easy to become its worshipful slave. He must labor to build the Earthly City even while he knows its walls will crumble and that he is in exile, an Aeneas commanded by Jove in this case to work on the walls of Dido's Carthage.

To the non-religious mind this Christian idea of education necessarily seems high-blown folly. To the religious mind, no matter what God it believes in, the Christian concept of education has that note

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of ultimate seriousness which comes from the realization that the work of classroom and library resonates in eternity.

This, certainly, is the note struck in this book. A lot of good talk went on at the Kent School seminar; one is grateful to Mr. Fuller for capturing so much of it in these pages. The wisdom this book contains is sorely needed now, when Sputniks I and II are so widely regarded as the most meaningful measure of our academic failures, and popular thinking on the subject of education has replaced Mark Hopkins and the log with Willie Ley and a slide rule.

The Ingredients

A CUP OF TEA FOR MR. THORGILL. By Storm Jameson. Harper. $3.50.

By GERALD WEALES

STORM JAMESON'S new book is, or so says her subtitle, "a novel of pride and corruption." These vices are actually the background against which she presents a story of moral regeneration, that of a recanting Communist who regains his strength by returning to the working-class roots from which he had divorced himself for the comfort and the respect of a position at Oxford.

The book has, it is true, many of the ingredients of a novel. There is, for instance, the ideational struggle of the hero, which is complicated by his guilt at having deserted his origins and by his relations with his wife, the spiritually incestuous sister of the book's leading secret Communist. There is a *raisonneur*, an acid-tongued but essentially *good* man, an Englishman, who is inexplicably everyone's errand-boy so that he can be in on every twist of the plot. There is a collection of academic clichés, more unpleasant even than the group that Mary McCarthy invented for *The Groves of Academe,* and, coming from them, pages and pages of the mixture of gossip and intellectual chatter that is the staple of any faculty party at an English or an American university. There is the thematic symbol that grows out of the cup of tea proffered the dying Mr. Thorgill and his uncomprehending, but typical, "Thanks, but I'll pay for it m'self." There is an attempted murder, a more successful rape and a false charge of homosexuality. There is, above all, the intricate workings of the secret Communists.

Despite this abundance, though, I read through Miss Jameson's novel with unflagging indifference. Momentarily, at the point at which the who's who of the Communist conspiracy was made clear, I had the flickering interest that a mystery story sometimes gives me, but not even the spy-story machinations were absorbing for long. The kind of secret activities that the author describes are now too familiar (the front page of the New York *Times* has carried more genuinely dramatic revelations in the last year than anything in the novel), and she weakens their validity by making her chief Communist a suave and assured intellectual who, for all the contemporaneousness of his being a scientist, recalls the spy chief of *The Thirteen Steps.* The logic of her story demands that he never be unmasked, but that outcome so distresses her that, almost as an afterthought, she invents a highly placed cousin for the *raisonneur* and the reader is assured that Dr. Paget will be watched. There is no real satire in the conversations of her academics and none of the frightening undertones with which someone like I. Compton-Burnett might have loaded them; even when they forward the plot, they are a kind of dull reporting that made me feel as though I were trapped in a faculty meeting that had been going on too long.

Another trouble, I fear, is that Miss Jameson's ideas are as empty as her characters, not because they are unimportant as ideas, but because she handles them with the leaden profundity that is characteristic of English novelists like Charles Morgan. In short, her intentions are honorable, her political and intellectual position respectable, but her novel is downright dull.

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Enduring History

THE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION. by Leon Trotsky. University of Michigan. $12.50.

By MICHAEL HARRINGTON

LEON TROTSKY paid the ultimate price for his genius: he was murdered for it. In a moving statement (in Victor Serge's *Vie et Mort de Trotsky*), his wife, Natalia, describes him at the end: "He had reached sixty. He was alone. He knew himself the last fighter of an annihilated legion. He had become a symbol for many, and he knew it. His duty was to maintain, clearly, accurately, a doctrine, a historic truth, a resolute waiting. For these reasons, he was a condemned man. The executions in Moscow, in Siberia, Turkestan and the Ukraine, the assassinations in Barcelona, these also condemned the outlaw in Mexico. He knew it;

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we knew it. Ever since the first Moscow trial, for three years, we awaited the assassin with a sharp, interior certitude."

The pick-axe of the G.P.U. struck him down while he was writing his biography of Stalin. For he was the one unbearable link with the tradition of October; he could not be tolerated. And his writings, those brilliant, ranging studies in which he nearly (though not quite) saw through the totalitarian horror which issued out of the work of his own idealism, these were as intolerable as the symbolic meaning of the man. The insane dictator who had corrupted what good there had been in the Revolution which Trotsky led snuffed out his life.

And now *The History of the Russian Revolution* has appeared again. Part of the enormous fabric of untruth which the dictator had spun has been repudiated by the dictator's successors. A few of the "annihilated legion" have been rehabilitated. And the genius of the assassinated still haunts the assassin. There was a period when Trotsky's books were reviled by almost everyone: calumniated by the Stalinists from their pseudo-left; withdrawn from publication (as in the case of *Stalin*) most probably because one of them offended America's alliance with Trotsky's murderer.

Our gain is great in the process. *The History of the Russian Revolution* is one of the most important works of non-fiction in the twentieth century. Written in the tradition of a wide-ranging Western Marxism, it has that firm authority which comes from the fact that the author was in the midst of the events which he describes. And its style, as it comes through in Max Eastman's translation, has a drama, a sweep, a tempo that is almost unique.

At the heart of the *History* is Trotsky's own thesis; that of the "Permanent Revolution." Bourgeois democracy, he argues, came in England and France and, somewhat deformed, in Germany, through the revolutionary action of the bourgeoisie itself. Out of their leadership came the nation-states of Europe in which democracy was the parliament, the peasant had his land and, above all, the bourgeois had the rights of capital. But by the twentieth century, such a transformation was no longer possible in the backward countries. The bourgeoisie was too weak and bound to the old order. The peasantry was dispersed, incapable of offering an alternate program in its own name. Thus, the mission of completing the bourgeois revolution fell upon the working class. But this was itself an anomaly, for the bourgeoisie could not accept "its" revolution from the hands of its enemy. As a result, the bourgeois revolution in a backward country would, under the leadership of the workers, become a permanent revolution: it would move from the past into the future, from Tsarism to socialism. It could survive only if it had the aid of advanced socialist states in the West, yet this was its dynamic.

The *History* is the flesh and blood depiction of the theory as it actually happened in practice For, up to a point, Trotsky was incredibly right (while Lenin and the other Russian socialists were wrong). When the bourgeoisie took power in the Russia of February, 1917, it did prove itself incapable of satisfying the deepest and most pressing social demands of the people. The Bolsheviks (with Trotsky and Lenin as leaders), raised the slogans of Peace, of Land for the peasant, of bread. But the anticipated revolution in the West which was to save the Russian Revolution from the curse of its backwardness (even at the moment when backwardness had made victory possible) never came. The Revolution was destroyed, and its murderer was Trotsky's assassin.

But this book is confined to the Revolution period. Its images of the workers, the peasants, the soldiers, its range and sweep are magnificent. And woven into the drama of the narrative is Trotsky's brilliant comment—his comparison of the private moods of the French and Russian royalty on the eve of their overthrow is startling in its aptness. True, *The History* makes no attempt at a sociological distance—it is history with a passion—yet, perhaps because of that fact, it will endure.

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